

FY2024 AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE-JUSTICE-SCIENCE, ENERGY AND WATER, AND INTERIOR-ENVIRONMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

SUMMARY OF APLU PRIORITIES

On March 2, Congress released [bill text](#) and explanatory statements for the Agriculture-FDA, Commerce-Justice-Science, Energy and Water Development, Interior-Environment, Military Construction-VA, and Transportation-HUD FY2024 appropriations bills. The House is expected to take up the legislation under suspension of the rules on Wednesday, March 6. The Senate would then follow suit, allowing final passage ahead of the March 8 deadline. The \$435 billion package funds agencies within the six bills through September 30, 2024, the end of the current fiscal year.

APLU updated our [Appropriations Priorities Chart](#) to reflect funding levels in the first FY2024 measure.

The analysis below contains important FY2024 funding levels and policy provisions of interest to APLU institutions within these six bills. The remaining federal agencies not funded within these bills are operating under a Continuing Resolution that will expire on March 22.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

[EXPLANATORY STATEMENT](#) | [BILL TEXT](#)

The bill provides \$1.678 billion for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), a decrease of \$22 million under FY2023. The bill includes \$1.076 billion for Research and Education Activities, \$561.7 million for Extension Activities, and \$41.1 million in Integrated Activities. It also includes \$11.8 million for the Native American Institutions Endowment fund.

Within the explanatory statement, the bill provides \$1 million to make competitive grants for agricultural research facilities in support of the Research Facilities Act (RFA). The explanatory statement further directs NIFA to combat citrus greening, expresses concern about rising cybersecurity threats, and asks the Secretary to report on collaboration between the Department, land-grant institutions, and other Federal agencies.

The bill report includes flat funding for Hatch Act (State Agricultural Experiment Station—SAES) and Smith-Lever (Cooperative Extension at 1862 institutions) accounts, providing \$265 million for SAES/Hatch and \$325 million for Smith Lever (b) and (c). Furthermore, the agreement provides flat funding of Evans-Allen research at \$89 million and 1890s Extension at \$72 million. For tribal colleges, Research Grants for 1994 institutions receives a flat \$7 million. Extension Services at 1994 Institutions receives \$11 million, which is flat when compared with FY2023. Payments Funding for 1994 institutions also receives flat funding (\$5 million).

The bill includes a decrease for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) of \$10 million, funding the program at \$445.2 million. Capacity funding for McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research is flat at \$38 million. Section 741 of the bill includes a waiver for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative matching requirement.

Finally, the bill includes rescissions across several USDA accounts that contain unobligated funds from other fiscal years. Section 785 rescinds \$37 million from Research and Education Activities within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

COMMERCE-JUSTICE-SCIENCE

[EXPLANATORY STATEMENT](#) | [BILL TEXT](#)

National Science Foundation

The agreement provides \$9.06 billion for the National Science Foundation, 5 percent below the FY2023 NSF base funding level. This includes \$25 million from the CHIPS for America Workforce and Education Fund.

- NSF Research and Related Activities (R&RA), \$7.2 billion, a \$600 million decrease from FY2023.
- NSF education and workforce training programs, \$1.17 billion, a decrease of \$200 million from FY2023 and at the FY2021 level.

Other priority area highlights include:

- \$250 million for the EPSCoR Program
- \$234 million for Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC), \$42 million over FY2023 levels

Congress does not usually specify funding levels for NSF directorates within the R&RA. The explanatory statement encourages “NSF to equitably distribute funding to support all basic research directorates within R&RA, as well as the Technology, Innovation and Partnerships Directorate.”

The explanatory statement does not provide a funding level for artificial intelligence, though the bill includes general support for AI related grants and interdisciplinary research initiatives and adopts the Senate’s “[Transparency, Interpretability, and Explainability of AI](#)” language. The bill directs NSF to invest in research to understand how and why models arrive at their outputs, and supports the National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource pilot.

The explanatory statement does not provide a funding level for quantum science, instead providing up to the president’s budget request for quantum information science research and encourages NSF to support the National Quantum Information Science Research Centers.

The explanatory statement provides no funding level but includes support for Mid-scale Research Infrastructure.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The bill provides flat to modest decreases from FY2023 levels for APLU member priorities for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) accounts. The Aeronautics Research Directorate (\$935 million) and the Space Grant Program (\$58 million) were flat funded. The Science Mission Directorate was cut to \$7.334 billion, six percent below the FY2023 level of \$7.795 billion. The bill provides \$1.1 billion to Space Technology, a \$100 million cut from the FY2023 level.

Within the Science Mission Directorate, the statement supports NASA's collaborative efforts with U.S. colleges and universities to conduct research through small spacecraft missions and provides \$30 million for these missions.

Within the Aeronautics Research Directorate, the joint explanatory statement encourages NASA to strengthen its collaborations with the Department of Energy, national laboratories, and universities to overcome energy storage for mobility technologies such as electric air flight.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Operations, Research and Facilities Account, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research receives \$656.05 million, representing a 1 percent decrease. The Sea Grant Program is flat funded at \$80 million, as is the Sea Grant Aquaculture Research program at \$14 million.

National Institute for Standards and Technology

The National Institute for Standards and Technology's (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEP) received \$175 million and the Manufacturing USA program received \$37 million, both flat funded from FY2023. The agreement directs NIST to create a centralized database of funded programs. Relating to CHIPS and Science Act implementation, the bill directs NIST to support geographically-diverse investments in small and medium sized semiconductor companies as it continues advancing awards to develop domestic semiconductor manufacturing capability. It also urges NIST to ensure the establishment of the National Semiconductor Technology Center (NSTC) is transparent, competitive, and operative by a qualified entity and to consider the importance of geographic diversity in the selection of facilities and technical centers.

Economic Development Administration

The legislation provides \$50 million for grants under the Regional Innovation Partnership (RIP), the same level as FY2023. The agreement encourages EDA to invest in university-based, high-tech business incubators to diversify distressed manufacturing communities and legacy urban and rural communities by encouraging entrepreneurship and patent creation and promoting technology commercialization through business startups. EDA is also encouraged to support the development of regional innovation clusters focusing on advanced wood products.

The agreement also includes \$41 million for the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs and clarifies that EDA may award planning grants and implementation grants.

Report Language of Interest

Open Access.-The agreement directs the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to produce an in-depth financial analysis of the August 25, 2022, Memorandum to Executive Departments and Agencies titled, "Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research" including the policy's anticipated impact on Federal research investments, research integrity, and the peer review process, as was previously directed in House Report 117-395, no later than 100 days after the enactment of this act. If OSTP fails to provide the Committees with the report within 100 days, it must pause implementation of the memorandum until production of the report.

DOJ Countering Espionage by the People's Republic of China (PRC).- The agreement directs the National Security Division to provide a report to Congress within 60 days of enactment, outlining all efforts undertaken to continue the identification and prosecution of espionage efforts against American businesses, research institutions, and academia emanating from the PRC.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

[EXPLANATORY STATEMENT](#) | [BILL TEXT](#)

The bill provides \$8.2 billion for the Department of Energy Office of Science, a 1 percent increase from FY2023 and \$460 million for ARPA-E, the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, a 2 percent decrease from FY2023.

The agreement also provides not less than \$135 million for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning capabilities across the Office of Science Programs and not less than \$245 million for the Office of Science's coordinated and focused research program in quantum information science (including not less than \$120 million for research and \$125 million for the five National Quantum Information Science Research Centers).

Furthermore, the agreement provides \$60 million for the Reaching a New Energy Sciences Workforce (RENEW) and Funding for Accelerated, Inclusive Research (FAIR) programs, in support of the Office of Science's engagement with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to build research capacity and workforce development, the same level as FY2023.

INTERIOR AND ENVIRONMENT

[EXPLANATORY STATEMENT](#) | [BILL TEXT](#)

The EPA's Office of Science and Technology funding is \$758.1 million, a 5.5 percent decrease over FY2022. The bill includes funding to continue the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program and directs the agency to distribute grants consistent with FY2023.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) receives \$207 million, the same level as in FY2023. \$150 million is set aside for grants, including \$65 million for federal-state partnerships, \$21.4 million for preservation and access programs, \$17.5 million for research programs, and \$6.2 million for digital humanities initiatives.

The bill provides \$15.5 million for the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) Water Resources Research Institutes and \$28.2 million for USGS Cooperative Research Units (CRUs), both flat funding from FY2023. The Joint Fire Science Program is funded at \$6 million, down from \$9 million in FY2023.